

**20 DECEMBER 1995**



**Operations**

**THE AFMC CENTER EXERCISE PROGRESS**

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Pages: 11

Distribution: F

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These instructions further implement the policies contained in AFD 10-2, *Readiness*, and AFI 10-204/AFMC Supplement 1, *Participation in the Military Exercise Program*. They outline the guidance for implementing a comprehensive AFMC centerlevel exercise program. This instruction gives center commanders the broadest authority and responsibility for designing and implementing an exercise program that best suits the mission, location, organizational structure, and conditions of the individual center. Center exercise programs exist solely for the purpose of enhancing the ability of units and individuals to successfully complete all of their peacetime and wartime contingency mission responsibilities. The exercise program gives people the opportunity to prepare ahead of time for contingency responsibilities and tasks that are not routinely part of their day-to-day work. Within the context of these instructions, the 38 EIW/CC will be treated as the "center commander" and will be responsible for overseeing and coordinating the exercise program for all AFMC Engineering & Installation forces, active and Air National Guard.

**1. Program Overview.** Exercises represent a primary tool for establishing and enhancing readiness and they provide the primary vehicle for demonstrating unit mission performance capabilities during readiness evaluations. The exercise program is a critical subelement of the center's overall readiness program. A comprehensive exercise program should present an organized approach for ensuring all center assigned units and individuals establish and maintain the capability to successfully perform their assigned contingency mission responsibilities. Within the program, exercises should follow a building block or "walk before run" build-up to full mission capability. Across every AFMC center, there are hundreds of contingency mission responsibilities that are not part of the day-to-day job. A comprehensive exercise program will support every single responsibility in one way or another.

**2. AFMC View of Exercises .** Center commanders are responsible for the readiness of their center's subordinate units and individuals. Live play exercises are just one tool for building and maintaining readiness. Exercises represent a continuous cycle of practice, training, and readiness improvement activities. Exercises are combined with continuous process review and improvement programs, process data

and information systems, training, and other human resource development programs to produce a full readiness posture. Frequency of exercises should be based on demonstrated performance in real world or exercises, as well as unique local mission circumstances. In addition to live play exercises, innovative approaches which save time and resources, yet enhance readiness, are expected to be an integral part of the center exercise program. Other methods of readiness preparation which supplement exercise play should include:

- Table top plans and process reviews, discussions, and seminars.
- Static reviews of readiness responsibility elements (i.e., mobility equipment showdowns, surge list review, SORTS report validation, etc.).
- Process walk-through (slow pace or under daily operating conditions versus worst case, time compressed, etc.).
- Individual functional event training exercises.
- Formal training courses.

**3. General Guidelines.** When an AFMC center is the host unit, the exercise program should be designed to meet the readiness needs of both the AFMC assigned and stationed units and the tenant/associate units that rely on the support or services provided by AFMC. As the Air Force continues to downsize its infrastructure and bases, AFMC major installations will continue to absorb additional Air Force and DoD tenants/associates. The center should try to ensure that the exercise program can satisfy the minimum requirements for everyone, if possible. Under current Air Force policy, tenant/associate unit exercise participation is governed by parent organization policy and instructions. Therefore, Air Force tenants/associates on AFMC installations are not specifically required to participate in AFMC initiated exercises, nor is AFMC required to participate in tenant/associate organization exercises. However, mutual agreement and negotiation, as well as integration of the separate programs, should overcome most difficulties this policy anomaly might cause. Conflicts with tenant/associate organizations over exercise participation should be elevated to HQ AFMC for resolution with the parent organization. See AFI 10-204/AFMC Supplement 1.

3.1. Tenant/Associate Organization Requirements and Participation. All Air Force and DoD organizations have an inherent need to exercise to one degree or another. At a minimum, tenant organizations have the same responsibility to practice procedures contained in all contingency plans for which they have responsibility. For DoD supporting agencies such as Defense Information Systems Agency and Defense Logistics Agency, those plans include emergency disaster and essential services restoration/recovery procedures, and asset protection procedures. It is the responsibility of those tenant/associate organizations to make known their exercise requirements that require host center support. Those exercise requirements and associated costs should be negotiated and documented in appropriate support agreements according to AFI 25-201, *Support Agreements Procedures*.

3.2. When DoD support agency participation in center exercises drives service requirements that exceed the levels negotiated in the service level agreements (SLA), the center can expect to be asked to reimburse the support agency for those excess costs. Centers should endeavor to understand the impacts of center exercises on support agencies, make a conscious decision when such participation is essential to exercise success, and budget appropriately.

3.3. Due to consolidation of DoD workload into regional centers and megacenters, most DoD support agencies that are AFMC tenants/associates support a large number of customers besides the AFMC

host center. In most cases, the DoD support agency cannot allow local exercises to interfere with the support they provide to the off-installation customers. Therefore, the center must fully coordinate all exercise event play that might impact the support agency's operation.

3.4. When DoD support agency exercise requirements require AFMC host base support in excess of the support negotiated and documented in appropriate support agreements, the DoD agency can be expected to reimburse the AFMC host for that support.

#### **4. Responsibilities.**

4.1. The AFMC Operations Office (AFMC/XPAO) is responsible for overseeing the AFMC exercise program and providing guidance to facilitate the development and execution of the centerlevel exercise program. AFMC/XPAO is specifically responsible for:

- Acting as the HQ AFMC office of primary responsibility (OPR) for centerlevel exercise program issues.
- Integrating and disseminating Air Force and AFMC exercise policy and guidance.
- Maintaining a current list of all center and HQ AFMC exercise point of contacts (POC) and cross-flowing that information to the appropriate centers and HQ AFMC POCs.
- Ensuring that center-level exercise reports and lesson-learned information is being cross-flowed between all centers and across HQ AFMC functional directorates.
- Analyzing center-level exercise reports to identify command-wide trends and systemic exercise and readiness training deficiencies.
- Identifying and planning long-term improvement initiatives that would enhance the effectiveness of the AFMC centerlevel exercise programs.
- Coordinating and providing HQ AFMC staff assistance to the centerlevel exercise program, when requested.

4.2. The HQ AFMC/IG is responsible for:

- Developing and maintaining exercise evaluation policy and guidance including use of the exercise evaluation team (EET) for formal exercise evaluation, and the exercise requirements during the HQ AFMC/IG Readiness Assessment visits.
- Coordinating with the HQ AFMC staff for the development of exercise evaluation criteria.
- Identifying exercise program "best practices," when noted during HQ AFMC/IG Readiness Assessments.
- Elevating center exercise program issues to HQ AFMC for resolution, when the issue exceeds the center's capability to resolve the issue.
- Identifying, where necessary, the need for HQ AFMC functional staff assistance.

4.3. All HQ AFMC Directorates are responsible for:

- Appointing readiness/exercise focal points for each functional mission area.
- Providing functional guidance to assist the center's in developing exercises that support the functional area's readiness requirements.

- Developing exercise evaluation criteria for their respective functional areas of responsibility and providing that criteria to the HQ AFMC/IG for inclusion within appropriate guidance documents.
- Assisting the centers in the design of functional event exercises, as requested.
- Reviewing centerlevel exercise evaluation reports to identify commandwide trends and systemic functional exercise and readiness training deficiencies.

4.4. AFMC Center Commanders are responsible for the readiness of all AFMC units and individuals directly assigned to them. Therefore, each AFMC Center Commander is responsible for establishing an exercise program that ensures that the required readiness levels are achieved and maintained. Center Commanders also have an overall responsibility, as host installation commander, to establish, within available resources, a program that meets the maximum number of tenant/associate exercise requirements. Specifically, each AFMC Center Commander is responsible for:

- Demonstrating involvement and commitment to readiness, supporting the centerlevel exercise program, and ensuring the involvement of the center leadership and middle managers.
- Designating a single OPR for the centerlevel exercise program.
- Determining, based on observed performance and factual performance data, the frequency, schedule, and methods of exercises conducted within the center exercise program. Elevate conflicts between this policy and functional exercise guidance to HQ AFMC for resolution.
- Establishing an exercise program management structure that ensures the exercise needs of all center subordinate units are addressed and that the exercise requirements and participation of other Air Force and DoD tenants/associates are facilitated.
- Programming, budgeting, and funding adequate centerlevel exercise funds, as required, to achieve and maintain the proper level of readiness for assigneds.
- Ensuring that center-level exercises are as realistic as possible, including appropriate base population responses, limited no-play zones, and feasible scenarios.
- Ensuring that all personnel assigned to deployable unit type codes (UTC) participate on a recurring basis in employment-type exercises that test their wartime skills. Due to local conditions, individuals may have to be sent on temporary duty to participate in another Air Force unit's employment exercise. Theater commander-in-chiefs' (CINC) field training exercises, described in AFI 10-204, may meet this requirement. Commanders should also review the readiness value of actual unit deployments for contingencies when determining further exercise requirements for individual UTC personnel.
- Establishing Memorandums of Agreement, as necessary, with other host installations detailing the exercise requirements and participation expectations for each of their center's geographically-separated units, detachments, or offices.
- Ensuring support agreements and SLAs are negotiated with tenant/associate organizations, as required, to detail exercise participation agreements, and exercise requirements agreements. Agreements on tenant/associate participation in the center exercise program management structure should also be documented.

4.5. The center designated exercise program OPR is responsible for organizing, directing, and continuously improving the center exercise program to ensure that it fully supports the center's readiness program requirements. Additional responsibilities include:

- Establishing an exercise data and information system that provides factual performance-based information in support of the exercise program's planning and execution needs. The data and information should include such things as the center units' mission responsibilities (peacetime and contingencies), unit and functional agency exercise requirements, Operations Plans (OPlan) tasking, and exercise evaluation and readiness assessment performance and comparative crossfeed trend data, and points of contacts.
- Developing an annual exercise master plan and schedule that outlines the projected total exercise activity for the center. For planning purposes, a copy of the annual exercise master plan will be forwarded to AFMC/XPAO and the HQ AFMC/IG. Scheduling information will be provided to other centers upon request to facilitate benchmark and crossfeed visits and deconfliction.
- Providing a copy of all exercise afteraction reports to AFMC/XPAO, HQ AFMC/IG, and each center exercise program OPR.
- Establishing and maintaining an effective exercise evaluation process and structure.
- Establishing an exercise Remedial Action Program which supports the readiness and exercise performance improvement and planning processes.
- Establishing an exercise afteraction reporting process.
- Implementing continuous process improvement within the overall exercise program.

**5. Exercise Program Requirements.** This section outlines the essential elements that will be embodied within all AFMC centerlevel exercise programs. How each item is addressed within the program is left to the discretion of the center commander and exercise program OPR. The information associated with each essential element is intended to provide helpful considerations for developing and enhancing that facet of the overall center exercise program.

**5.1. Exercise Program Management Structure.** The management structure should facilitate the exercise program participation and oversight of all major subordinate units and functional organizations. The center may choose to use councils, teams, committees, or any other integrated management approach to satisfy this item. The structure should effectively contribute to:

- Center leadership and middle manager exercise program involvement.
- Oversight and development of the exercise master plan and schedule.
- Analysis of readiness related metrics, indicators, and information and setting both broad and specific exercise objectives based on factual, performancebased information.
- Reviewing, prioritizing, and tracking the progress toward completion of remedial actions.
- Identifying gaps and improvement opportunities within the exercise program.
- Facilitating timely communications and cascading exercise information, requirements, and center exercise philosophies to all levels of the center.
- Integrating tenant/associate organizations into the center exercise processes.

**5.2. Exercise Requirements Determination.** Exercise requirements are derived from the center's contingency mission responsibilities. The most simplistic view of exercise requirements is that all mission tasks and responsibilities contained in every plan written by the center should be exercised.

More specifically, the major AFMC contingency mission are as/processes for which we must prepare our people to perform include:

- Initial response to contingency notification and tasking, including command and control, deployment, threat condition response, security, and regeneration of deployable forces after deployment.
- Deployed mission support, including functional mission performance for all UTC tasked forces.
- Post disaster recovery of operations and essential services/systems restoration.
- Ability to survive and operate in a wartime environment (all deployable units) including operations under nuclear, biological, and chemical threat conditions, and medical buddycare procedures.
- Acceleration of acquisition, test, and laboratory operations during contingencies.
- Depot workload surge of aircraft and exchangeables/consumables and weapons system acceleration and compression.
- Continental United States sustaining force operations including base operations support after deployment force departure and individual mobilization augmentee personnel processing and mission performance, and the Resource Augmentation Duty (READY) program application and effectiveness.

#### 5.2.1. Other sources that can be helpful in determining exercise requirements:

- Functional Air Force instructions.
- Unit mission statements.
- Unit designed operations capability statements contained in SORTS and functional manager tasking letters for nonSORTS units.
- UTC mission capability statements.
- Center operations and contingency plans, including war plans, disaster recovery, and continuity of OPlans (to include the READY program).
- Air Force and AFMC War and Mobilization Plans, Volume 1 (WMP1) and AFMC WMP, Volume 3, Unit Tasking.

**5.3. Exercise Master Planning and Scheduling.** To ensure that the entire volume of centerlevel exercise requirements can be accommodated, it is essential that an exercise master plan be developed and updated on a frequent basis. The master plan should contain a building block approach which should prepare the center's organizations for their contingency missions. The master plan/schedule should be integrated with both the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and commandwide exercise schedule, as well as, the theater CINCs' exercise program participation outlined in AFI 10-204 and the JCS Five Year Training Plan. Real world operations and contingencies may disrupt the plan unexpectedly, or may negate the requirement for certain exercises if actual contingency performance satisfactorily met the mission requirements. Flexibility and alternate plans should take such possibilities into account. The master plan should be reviewed and modified, if necessary, at the completion of each exercise. Poor exercise results may drive additional exercise requirements while satisfactory or superior performance may reduce the exercise requirements. Careful integration of the master plan with the annual center schedule of events is required to gain maximum benefit for the exercise effort.

**5.4. Effective Exercise Design.** The ability to design an effective exercise requires that the exercise developers be thoroughly knowledgeable of the mission responsibilities, circumstances, organizations, and processes that will be involved, as well as the objectives of the exercise. The exercise environment must match the purpose for conducting the exercise. Worst case conditions may be inappropriate if the exercise is being conducted to familiarize people with new processes. Additionally, if extremely unrealistic story lines have to be created to rationalize grouping different events together, then it may mean that the event design is wrong. Scenarios must be plausible within the context of the major theme of the scenario. If a major regional contingency plan execution is the theme, then it may be unreasonable to also build a hurricane disaster into the scenario just to drive a mass casualty exercise. Lack of plausibility of the scenario is detrimental to achieving exercise program success. Crossflowing scenario and exercise information between centers will enhance the overall AFMC exercise program. As part of the exercise design, supporting materials master scenario events lists (MSEL), Exercise Plans (EXPlan) and/or control staff instructions, should be created for every multifunctional exercise, whether it is a single event, such as a nonnotice antihijacking, or a weeklong composite exercise. These materials provide critical exercise coordination and control information for all exercise evaluators and trusted agents. The basic AFI 10-204 and the Air Force Exercise Planners' Handbook referenced therein, both describe the MSELs and EXPlan. For smaller exercises, both may be extremely short, where for large, complex scenarios, there may be quite a bit of material contained in both. The EXPlan and the MSELs are essential for ensuring that the exercise is fully coordinated and that all evaluators and trusted agents know exactly what, when, and where every event and activity will occur and what the exercise is attempting to do. The EXPlan and MSELs put discipline into the process and help increase the value added nature of the exercise. Formats should suit the local program. Previous JCS, Air Force, and AFMC examples, as well as comparison and benchmark examples, should help each program refine their exercise materials.

**5.4.1. Composite Exercise Scenarios.** Realworld execution of major OPlans from initial warning through contingency completion is the primary mission tasking focus of all Air Force deployable units as well the driver for AFMC's in-place materiel support mission. The exercising of this type scenario drives the need for large scale, total center exercise which tests all aspects of the operations. Composite exercises based on the center's major regional contingency OPlans should be a primary, and recurring exercise theme. For centers that are tasked to support aviation units under the Core UTC package concept outlined in AFMAN 10-401, *Operations Plan and Concept Plan Development*, exercises should continually focus on melding the AFMC supporting forces into the supported aviation unit's operations and identify ways to better integrate operations during contingencies.

**5.5. Exercise Evaluation.** Detailed guidance concerning the use of the EET and the conduct of formal exercise evaluations is contained in AFMCI 90XXX (publication pending). The exercise evaluation process is one of the most critical elements in conducting an effective exercise program. Holding exercises without a thorough evaluation scheme in place wastes time and resources and is mostly unproductive. An effective evaluation process requires fully knowledgeable, trained, and motivated evaluators. The evaluators must have a high degree of functional expertise and have total familiarity with the tasks being evaluated. During the course of exercises, there must be sufficient recurring evaluator presence among the participants to ensure that all participants feel that their participation is not only required, but that someone knows that they are participating. If participants are responding to basewide threat conditions, but no one ever checks their procedures and gives them feedback, then they are likely to lose interest in participating the next time and may feel that there really is no need to

know the procedures. Evaluators must also have credibility. The exercise evaluator must have current exercise evaluation checklists that reflect the center's up-to-date processes, plans, and procedures. Additionally, evaluators need to be fully knowledgeable of the exercise scenario and sequence of events and be at their assigned locations exactly as planned. The evaluator must be able to inform the participants of proper processes and procedures and be able to inform the participants, at the proper time, so that maximum training benefits are obtained. Finally, the evaluator must be able to accurately evaluate performance against evaluation criteria, document the exercise observations and deficiencies, and assist in the development of improvement actions that address root causes.

**5.6. Exercise Criteria.** Center detailed exercise evaluation criteria is developed primarily from the exercise evaluation criteria contained in AFMCI 90XXX (publication pending). That criteria identifies essential contingency mission processes, tasks, events, and performance areas that center units execute during different phases of the peace-to-war timeline. The generic AFMC "commoncore" evaluation criteria must be expanded and refined into detailed evaluation criteria at the center level to incorporate the actual policies, plans, processes, and procedures that describe the way that specific center has chosen to "do the mission." The center exercise evaluation criteria should detail the "who, what, where, when, and how" for each mission task. During the exercise, the mission task accomplishment is evaluated in comparison to the center's documented way of doing business, unless the objectives of the exercise are specifically testing new or different ways of approaching the task. During exercises, the overall performance for mission events should be used as a reference mark for measuring the effectiveness of the mission event processes and how well the objectives of the exercise were met. Noted evaluation deficiencies should relate to the process steps and the changes or improvements that need to be implemented to enhance the ability to satisfactorily perform the mission in the future.

**5.7. Exercise AfterAction Reporting.** Although the overall format is left to the discretion of the exercise program OPR, exercises should be completed with an afteraction report. Each report should identify: overall exercise objective; scenario description; exercise subobjectives; observations worthy of "best practice" consideration; lessons-learned; remedial actions; and improvement recommendations. Exercise afteraction reports serve several useful purposes. First, they document the exercise objectives, scenarios, observed events and the circumstances under which the exercise was conducted. Second, exercise reports document the evaluators observations, as well as, recommendations for improving future performance. Finally, the exercise reports serve as valuable crossfeed mechanisms for lessonslearned, "best practice," and benchmarking consideration. Conscientious documentation of all observations may yield trends over time that otherwise may not be apparent if minor items are not documented. HQ AFMC functional managers may also use the reports to gain insight into cross-center, systemic readiness problems and trends.

**5.8. Remedial Actions.** One of the most beneficial, yet most difficult, areas within the exercise process is the crafting of effective remedial actions. Every finding should be accompanied by a root cause analysis to identify the optimum course of improvement actions. Remedial actions should focus on systemic problems and actions that will yield longterm mission performance improvements. Exercise remedial actions should not be compliance oriented unless compliance is mandatory. Rather, the exercise analysis should identify why observed processes or procedures were out of compliance and then the remedial action should address the fundamental causes, such as training, proficiency, education, or communication. Caution should be applied to ensure that remedial actions focus on improving real mission performance instead of "exercise" performance, except where the remedial actions address exercise program improvements. Finally, remedial action tracking and closure should be an

active part of the exercise program. Remedial action plans and closure progress should be high priority management attention and review items.

**5.9. Exercise Program Improvement Planning.** Every effective program should have an improvement process. A regular program review cycle should be established to review things such as: program requirements projections versus actual accomplishments; program statistics; data, and indicator trends; budget forecasts; mission forecasts; and overall program strengths and weaknesses. An exercise program unit self assessment conducted using the AFI 90501, *Criteria for Air Force Assessments*, can provide significant insight into the exercise program's management structure, processes, and improvement opportunities. Benchmarking and unit comparison initiatives should be integrated into the long term improvement process. Centers should actively seek these opportunities outside of AFMC and provide feedback of the results to others within the command. The regular program review should identify opportunities that should feed the continuous program improvement process. The management structure should be extensively involved throughout the process.

**6. Exercise Guidelines.** The following additional information is provided for consideration to enhance the center program:

**6.1. Simulations.** Simulations should be kept to the absolute minimum, consistent with safety, security, and resource conservation. Local simulations can often mask the inability to successfully perform the mission. Where simulations are used, the exercise management structure should be in the simulation approval process. The management structure should verify, to the extent possible, that the capability to perform the mission exists even though certain actions are being simulated prior to approving any simulations.

**6.2. Play/NoPlay Zones.** The exercise play area should normally include all areas of the installation that would normally be affected by the mission event or operation that is being exercised. Inconvenience should not be an acceptable excuse. If absolutely necessary, the capability to complete the mission responsibilities should be demonstrated, either for a limited time, or through player description of the proper procedures. Once the proper procedures have been satisfactorily demonstrated or described, then remaining accomplishment could be simulated. Evaluators should routinely transit the noplay areas during an exercise to ensure that personnel are not "hiding" in the no-play zone to avoid participating in the exercise.

**6.3. Scenarios.** The exercise program should use a wide array of exercise scenarios to ensure personnel are exposed to as many potential operating circumstances as possible. Routinely using the same scenario could lead to gaming the exercise and reducing the exercise benefits. Scenarios should also be feasible and aligned within the bounds of planning assumptions and guidance.

**6.4. Conditions.** Exercises should also be held under a variety of conditions. Not all exercises have to occur under "worst case" conditions. Unit manning conditions should also be varied. The "expert" should not always be eliminated in the scenario. Likewise, replacement personnel and mobilization augmentees should not always be immediately available, even after proper requests are submitted. Consistent with safety, exercises should be conducted during all four seasons. Employment type exercises should normally be stressful and fast paced to add realism and to help inject some "fog and friction" of war. Resource availability and essential service levels should also be varied to test the resourcefulness of the players.

**6.5. Exercise Intensity.** Exercise intensity can be described in terms of exercise length versus number of events exercised versus number of items done within an exercise event (Example: a deployment exercise process 100 percent of the UTCs tasked in the center's most demanding major regional OPlan; 50 percent will be processed within the first 12 hours and the remaining 50 percent within the next 48 hours). Intensity has volumes, times, and quantities. Centers can use the intensity levels contained in AFMCI 90XXX (publication pending) as a guide for establishing the intensity level for each exercise element. The AFMCI 90XXX (publication pending) intensity levels provide the minimum standard "standing" mission capability expectations for all tasked units, regardless of lesser current tasking and will be the intensity levels that centers will normally have to exercise to during HQ AFMC/IG conducted readiness assessments. Centers may exercise at lower levels of intensity to achieve specific exercise objectives. Exercising at extreme or maximum intensity levels may not yield significantly enhanced benefits. However, for some mission area responsibilities, exercising at higher intensity than the minimum may be required due to unique conditions, risks, or responsibilities that exist at the specific center.

**6.6. Objectives.** Every exercise has to have one or more objectives. The objectives are derived from the center exercise master plan, remedial action process, the readiness assessment process, and supporting readiness data and information. Objectives define "why" the exercise is being conducted. Objectives should drive exploration of training, plans, procedures, processes, communication, and improvement activities.

**7. Other Program Considerations.** The following paragraphs outline additional exercise program considerations.

**7.1. Safety.** Exercises must conform to all peacetime safety policies and procedures. Evaluators must take positive actions to ensure that unsafe exercise operations are terminated and that safety is restored. Exercise planning should account, to the maximum extent possible, for areas or events within the exercise where safety could be compromised, and include safety discussions in the pre-exercise meetings and briefings. Certain exercises may require additional safety monitor augmentation solely for the purpose of safety observation.

**7.2. Operations Security.** Real world operations security must be a consideration during the planning and execution of all exercises. Because most exercises are practicing how the center would execute one or more OPlans, the exercise process must implement extensive measures to protect realworld operations security information and essential elements of information.

**7.3. Environmental Protection.** Exercises are not authorizations to bypass or ignore the established environmental protection policies and procedures. Evaluators should receive training concerning environmental protection during their initial and continuing training.

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